

New Starts Bi-Weekly Briefing – February 23, 2010

Notes: Bring scorecard to each meeting.

TRO-2, TRO-3, TRO-6, TRO-8, and TRO-10 participated via teleconference.

Fort Lauderdale

- The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) proposes to construct a 4.2-mile, \$100.0 million urban streetcar to go through downtown.
- The cost effectiveness (CE) figure is about \$450.00.
- Should FTA move forward with land use, economic development, finance and other evaluations? How much does FTA want to do regarding a PMO review, technical capacity, and financial capacity?
- Recently, FTA rescinded the policy that projects must receive at least a *Medium* CE rating to be recommended for New Starts funds.
- Broward County wants to do tax increment financing with DDA, but only if the project can move forward.
- TPE proposed assigning a land use contractor to evaluate the project for land use and economic development to see if those ratings will outweigh the *Low* CE rating. FTA could do this before initiating oversight reviews. TRO-4 concurred with this approach.
- TRO-4 noted that the project has received an appropriation and that the grantee applied for alternatives analysis funding.
- NEXT STEP/ACTION ITEM:
 - Staff will discuss this project at the TOA bi-weekly meeting this week.

Denver, East Corridor and Gold Line

- TPM has spoken with the PMO and TRO-8 about the possibility of executing one versus two Full Funding Grant Agreements (FFGAs).
- The Regional Transportation District (RTD) will meet with FTA Headquarters on the afternoon of February 24th and hold a policy meeting with FTTA on February 25th.
- RTD would like to receive final design (FD) approvals in April.
- TPM stated that readiness and cost reviews are underway.
- NEXT STEP/ACTION ITEM:
 - Staff will try to talk with the Administrator about the projects before the bi-weekly TOA meeting on February 25th.

Los Angeles, Westside Extension

- The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) proposes a 9.0-mile heavy rail extension of the Red Line.
- Measure R will not provide enough funding for the project.
- LACMTA would like preliminary engineering (PE) and FD approval for the entire alignment. They would like to receive a Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) approval by segment.
- The draft environmental impact statement should be released by September.

- FTA has not received cost and benefits information.
- TPE mentioned that as a potential precedent, FTA allowed the entire Orlando project into PE and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was completed for the entire 60-mile alignment. The FONSI, however, discussed minimum operable segments (MOSs).
- TPM mentioned that Second Avenue Subway might also serve as an example.
- TRO-9 stated that there would be a 25-year difference between completion of the first and last segments.
- Why does the grantee want to move forward with the entire line for New Starts and NEPA?
- The team will need to ask TPE-30 if NEPA can be or has been done for projects not expected to operate for 25-30 years.
- The team is hesitant about preparing a roadmap until there is more certainty about whether to move the project forward.
- LACMTA wants to submit a PE application in August for approval in September or October.
- LACMTA is still examining different alternatives for the third segment.
- NEXT STEPS/ACTION ITEMS:
 - TRO-9 will attend the quarterly meeting scheduled for February 24th.
 - TPE will look for a paper FTA prepared about MOSs.

Pioneer Parkway

- Lane Transit District asked FTA if we would consider a Project Construction Grant Agreement (PCGA) amendment for the project. The PCGA cost estimate was \$41.3 million with a revenue operations date of January 2011.
- The revised cost estimate is \$40.7 million and the project is about 60 percent complete.
- LTD has about \$0.5 million in STP funds they would like to deobligate.
- In addition to changing the cost estimate, they would like to add scope such as modify stations and construct a temporary road connector.
- NEXT STEP/ACTION ITEM:
 - TPM and TRO-10 would like discuss the project later this week or next week.

Information Items

- The Houston North and Southeast FFGAs are nearly developed. FTA is waiting for contract renegotiation information from Metro.
- FTA might approve FD for the St. Paul-Minneapolis Central Corridor light rail in late March. An LONP request has been submitted for St. Paul-Minneapolis.
- An application for a second Early Systems Work Agreement (ESWA) request has been received for the Access to the Region's Core project. The ESWA pertains to a second tunneling contract and other items. Bids expire in mid-April. TCC stated that a letter of abeyance has been sent to the complainants.
- There had been a delay in the PMO assignment for the Central Mesa light rail extension. A draft report is expected by the end of this month.
- The Hartford project needs all railroad agreements. The grantee wants an FFGA to move forward this spring.
- Potentially, FTA could execute a PCGA for Fitchburg in August. FTA and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority held a call a few weeks ago. A roadmap has been drafted. There might be an American with Disabilities Act issue at a station.

- On February 24th, FTA will hold a conference call with Austin Metro to discuss a timeline for a PCGA. They would like to execute a PCGA by June.
- FTA does not expect to execute a PCGA for the Fort Collins project before December. The city needs to work on a railroad agreement.
- FTA expects to receive a FD request for Assembly Square within the next few weeks.
- A Letter of No Prejudice (LONP) has been received for a tunnel boring box for the San Francisco Central Subway LRT. The grantee would like to start work in August or September.
- TRO-9 stated that the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) wants FD approval for late summer. VTA wants a programmatic agreement to support the environmental impact statement.
- The timing of the Draper FD is uncertain. The team is preparing a roadmap.
- FTA is unsure about the schedule for the Honolulu project.
- NEXT STEPS/ACTION ITEMS:
 - For the February 25th meeting with the Administrator, staff will ask if he wants to move forward with the ESWA for ARC.
 - Staff will discuss the status of Norfolk with TOA at the bi-weekly meeting.
 - Discuss highway benefits research and environmental management systems training at the upcoming TOA bi-weekly.